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Janene C. Plourde  
*Western Washington University*

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KLIPSUN

v. 7  
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MARCH 1977



THE MANY SIDES OF HOUSING



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*Back cover by Charles Roper*

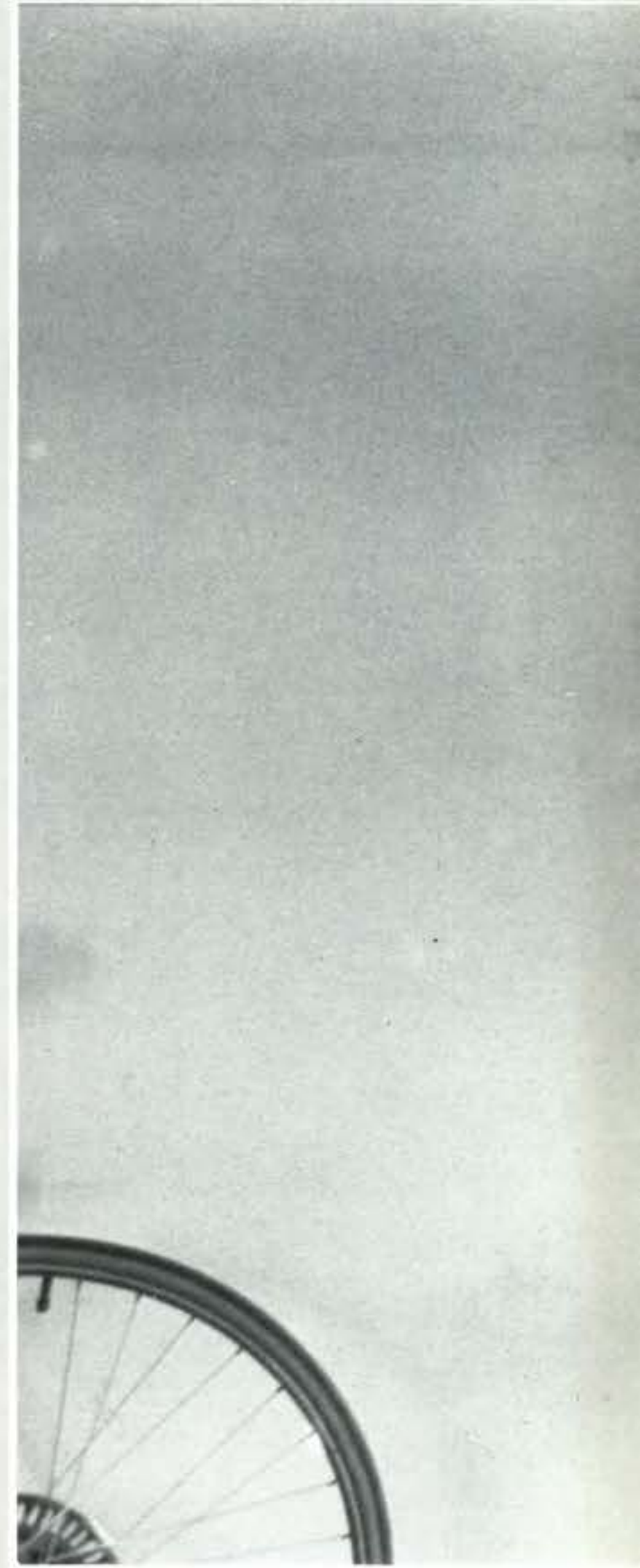
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*Editor: Janene C. Plourde, Photo Editor, Bob Slone, Story Editor: D. Starbuck Goodwyn, Production Manager: Kathi Morod, Art Director: Vic Davis. Staff: Darrell Butorac, Jim Harrison, Kyung Sun Hong, Greg Hoofnagle, Patti Jones, Rich Leavitt, Ann Legry, Anita Mapes, Ed Mund, Brian Nelson, Charles Roper, Liz Rust, Joanne Simonarson, Deanna Uerling. Advisor: Pete Steffens.*

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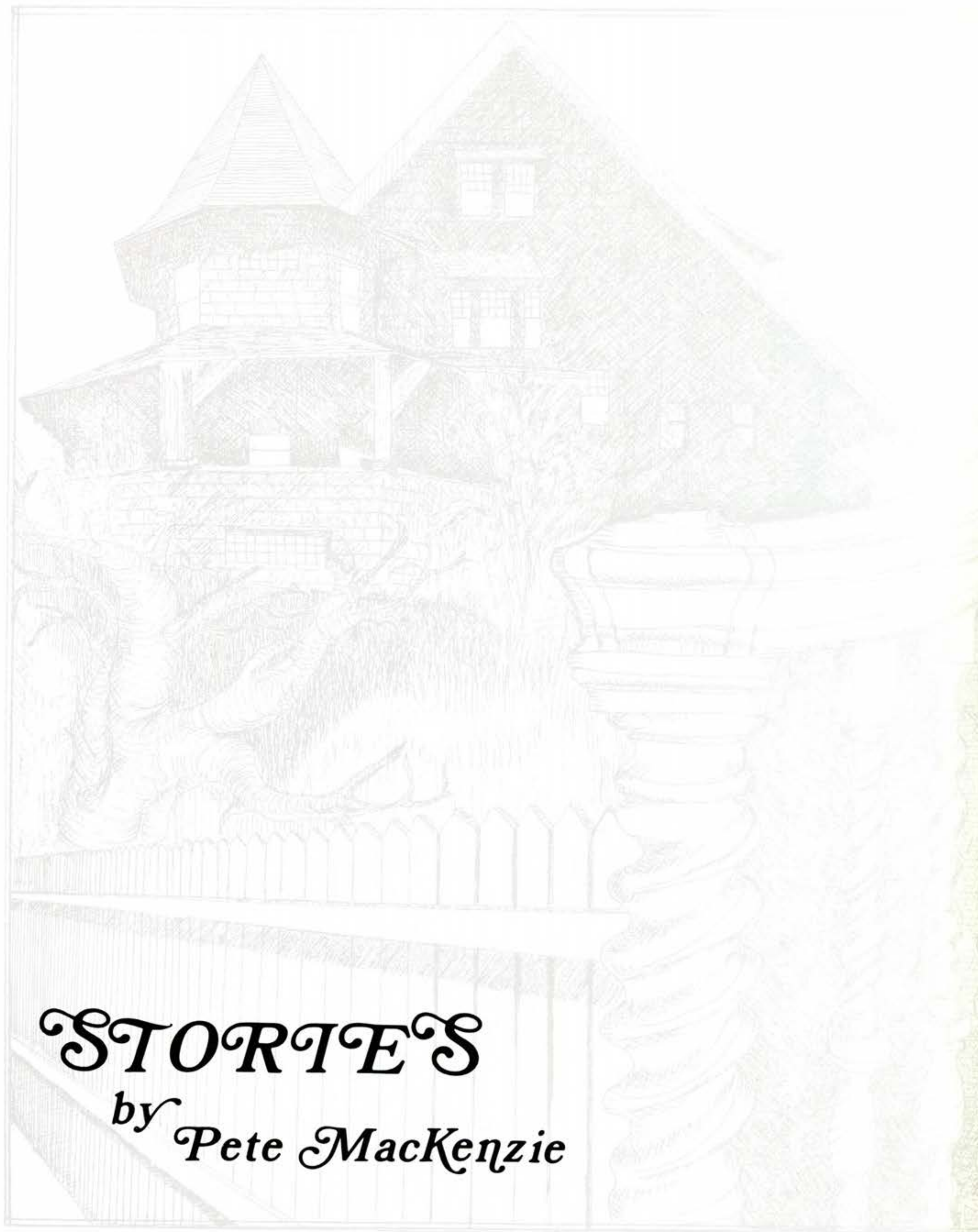
*Klipsun is a Lummi Indian word meaning "beautiful sunset."*













Houses are like people.

Molded by years of experience, they share rain and sun, laughter and grief, pain and joy with everything around them. Life rubs off on houses — and in them. Spent emotions linger and drift into their unseen boards and plaster. Warehouses of past humanity, they gather the energy and defeat of those they've sheltered. They speak.

But, like most people, houses don't speak unless someone's willing to listen. Listen, and they tell stories never heard before.

"Old man Smith lived here," whispers a single nail in the closet. "Fashioned us and called us home. He touched that bedpost on his way to market. He once laughed near that wall. He sat next to me and cried. He put a secret in that cupboard. His children covered me with their wails and the old man gave the bedroom door his last gasp. Part of him calls us home still."

A creaky board in the middle of the living room, a loose doorknob, a rip in a long stretch of wallpaper, a corner of the ceiling all quietly clamor to tell their story. All at once.

The symphony of voices rises to the roof, joins the conversation between shingles and wind, dances on the chimney and does a wondrous half-twist off an awning no longer there.

Forgotten smiles and tears rush out from dark hallways and play spin-the-bottle in the kitchen. Stopped, the once-full jumbo points to perished baby rattles and crooked canes. They somersault twice and join the symphony, remembering the time the old man drank a few more bottles than he should have.

The stairway counts the number of footsteps it held in 1934, quite content to keep its thoughts to itself. The 17th pair of feet belonged to a young soldier who never came back.

How many faces, the stairway asks no one in particular, looked out the attic window — wondering how far it was to the bottom? How many mothers cooked their first Thanksgiving turkey in that stove? How many listened when we wanted to speak?

All houses ask questions — and every rooftop shingle and hallway panel answers back. But the bedroom closet door doesn't always hear what goes on in the kitchen. The kitchen has no clue about the porch. The stairway keeps its secrets to itself. Everything has a piece of the action.

The pieces talk with each other until they become a collection of stories. The stories, married forever to every brick and board, become a personality — an elusive watchfulness that doesn't move on when the floorboards crack and bannisters rot. It lingers even when a roll of brash, young wallpaper covers its finer years. It lingers whether anyone notices or not.

But it doesn't hide. It doesn't have to. Those who can't see beyond structure and form will never plumb its secrets anyway.

Those who listen deserve to touch the stories. \*







"I don't know why they don't come back. Maybe their enthusiasm starts to burn out and they decide it's not worth the hassle," Diddy said. "If they would start filing their complaints and winning them, things could start to change."

There is not enough cheap but suitable housing in Bellingham to meet the demand, Israel said. Thus, students take what they can get and have little bargaining power. Perhaps one person is not willing to sign a contract which states that \$5 will be paid to the landlord everytime a friend spends the night, but there are plenty of other people waiting in line who are willing to sign anything just to have shelter when the quarter begins.

"This city is one of the worst I've ever seen, as far as landlords taking advantage of tenants is concerned," Israel said.

Without bargaining power, students have only their rights to protect them. So why don't they pursue them more often? One reason may be that students are transitory and unable to make a commitment to stick around and see something through. Political lethargy appears to be prevalent among students, as evidenced by the campus legal services' experience, and may be another reason. Most of us, however, are probably like Mrs. Harris was when her living nightmare first began: unable to act simply because we have no idea of what our rights are.

The comprehensive Residential Landlord/Tenant Act, enacted by the state legislature in 1973, lists the rights of tenants and landlords alike, and details the legal procedures for pursuing them. One need not, for instance, put up with a bathtub through which sewage flows because the landlord refuses to repair it. The Landlord/Tenant Act provides a simple remedy for such a problem.

First, give your landlord a written notice of the needed repair. If the problem is a lack of heat or water, or a really hazardous condition, your landlord is allowed 24 hours to fix it. If the problem is a lack of hot water or electricity, the landlord must be given 48 hours. Seven days must be allowed to fix something which would cost less than \$75, or half a month's rent (whichever is less.) One month is required for all other cases. If your landlord fails to act within the specified time, and your rent is paid up, you may move out immediately after giving written notice and will not have to forfeit any prepaid rent or deposit. (Under almost any other circumstance, you are required to give 20 days notice before moving out.)

If you do not want to move out, and the needed repairs do not exceed \$75, or half a month's rent, you may give the landlord two bids from licensed repairmen, along with your notice of a needed repair. If the landlord fails to start repairs within the specified time, you may contract with the low bidder

and deduct the repair cost from your next month's rent. Deductions cannot exceed one month's rent in a twelve-month period. Using the same procedure, you can do the repairs yourself, if they do not require a licensed repairman.

Mrs. Harris could have used the repair-and-deduct remedy, or she could have exercised her right to report her landlord to the building, or health department. The act forbids landlords to retaliate against a tenant for reporting any code violations, or pursuing any of the rights contained in the act. "Retaliation" includes eviction, rent increase, reduction of services or an increase in a tenant's obligation. If a landlord does any of these things within 90 days of the tenant's action, the landlord will be considered to be retaliating, and is subject to a suit.



"Most of our cases deal with landlords refusing to make repairs," Israel said. "Many people buy houses downtown for investment purposes. They hold them for a while and then tear them down to build apartments. They don't want to put any money into them."

Deposits are also the subject of a great deal of complaints. One couple, who recently went to Northwest Washington Legal Services for help,



signed a deposit agreement which said that \$65 would be withheld for any cleaning required after they moved out. When they did move, they cleaned their apartment well and the manager told them that it looked "fine." Yet, the landlord withheld the deposit without putting in writing any itemization of where the money went. Legal Services is preparing to file a complaint against this landlord, stating that the contract's stipulation was unreasonable.

The Associated Students' Legal Services recommends that students come into their office with the contracts before signing them. Often there is more in them than meets the eye. Under the \$65 cleaning clause, for instance, the couple could have lost their money for something so little as having a few spots on the window.

Under the Landlord/Tenant Act, landlords are required to tell tenants exactly what the deposit covers when they first move in. It is a good idea to go over the house with the landlord and put in writing a list of all the damages present when you first arrive. Damage deposits cannot be withheld for normal wear and tear. Your landlord must either return your deposit or give you an itemized account of where your money went within 14 days after you move out. If you feel your deposit is being withheld unjustifi-

ably, you may take your landlord to small claims court at a cost of about \$5.

"A landlord once told me that he had almost \$10,000 worth of deposits in his bank account," Israel said. "Most students can't stick around after the end of the quarter and so they forfeit their deposits."

A young man recently walked into the Off-Campus Housing Listing Service Office, complaining that his landlord would not let him have women in his room, "even to visit." (He lives in a rooming house.) This man, Israel said, probably does have the right to have women in his room, under the common law right of enjoyment.

Landlords repelled by unmarried couples living together would do well to give up the housing business. The law forbids discrimination on the basis of sex, marital status, race, creed or national origin. (Homosexuals are not yet covered under the law.) Those newspaper ads which read: "Married couples only" or "Married couples preferred" are illegal, unless they are ads for a room within a person's home.

Certain landlords may seem a vulturous lot, but students who do not know their rights, or do not want to exercise them, perpetuate the problem.\*



# No Deposit, No Return

by Ann Legry

**G**etting back a damage deposit is often one of the biggest hassles that renters face. Because of this, it's good to know BEFORE you sign the deposit agreement what your legal rights and responsibilities are.

In Bellingham, a renter can expect to pay between \$50 and \$150 deposit depending on the landlord, the building, and sometimes the number of roommates. A landlord who requires no deposit is an almost-extinct species.

Under law, the agreement must state if the deposit is a damage, cleaning or security deposit. It must also list the reasons for which the deposit may not be returned.

Usually it's only after you've signed the agreement, hooked up the stereo and piled five hundred pounds of books on the shelves that you discover parts of your apartment are in need of repair.

Some of these repairs are the landlord's responsibility and are defined in the Landlord-Tenant Act of 1973.

Many Western students offer advice on how to get rid of fleas living in furniture based on personal experience. Usually, this advice involves using many cans of Raid and evacuating the house for a day. But you don't have to spend your money, because it is the landlord's responsibility, not yours, to control or get rid of fleas, rats, etc. unless you somehow caused the infestation.

Likewise, a landlord is responsible for other defects unless the damage was caused by you or a guest. These responsibilities include appliances and the electrical, heating and plumbing systems.

If a repair is needed and your landlord hasn't done anything about it, you should give him written notice describing the defect, and noting the date and the landlord's name.

For most defects, he must make the repairs within 30 days. (If you are without heat or water because of the defect, or if it endangers your life, he has only 24 hours to make the repairs.)

After that time, if he still hasn't made the repairs, you have several means of recourse.

You can say to hell with it and legally end your contract without giving any notice and collect any advance rent you may have paid.

You can take him to court.

Or, you can give him, in writing, at least two bids on the repairwork that's needed. From that time, he has 15 days to make the repairs. After that, you can pay the lowest bidder to do the work and deduct that amount from your next month's rent. You can also fix it yourself, if the job doesn't require a licensed repairman, and bill your landlord or deduct the amount from the rent (if it isn't more than \$75 or half a month's rent).

**A**fter you move, your deposit must be returned within two weeks. If any or all of it has been deducted, a list of damages or fees explaining the deductions must accompany the notice. If there is no such list, or you believe some of the deductions are incorrect, you

can sue for the return of your deposit.

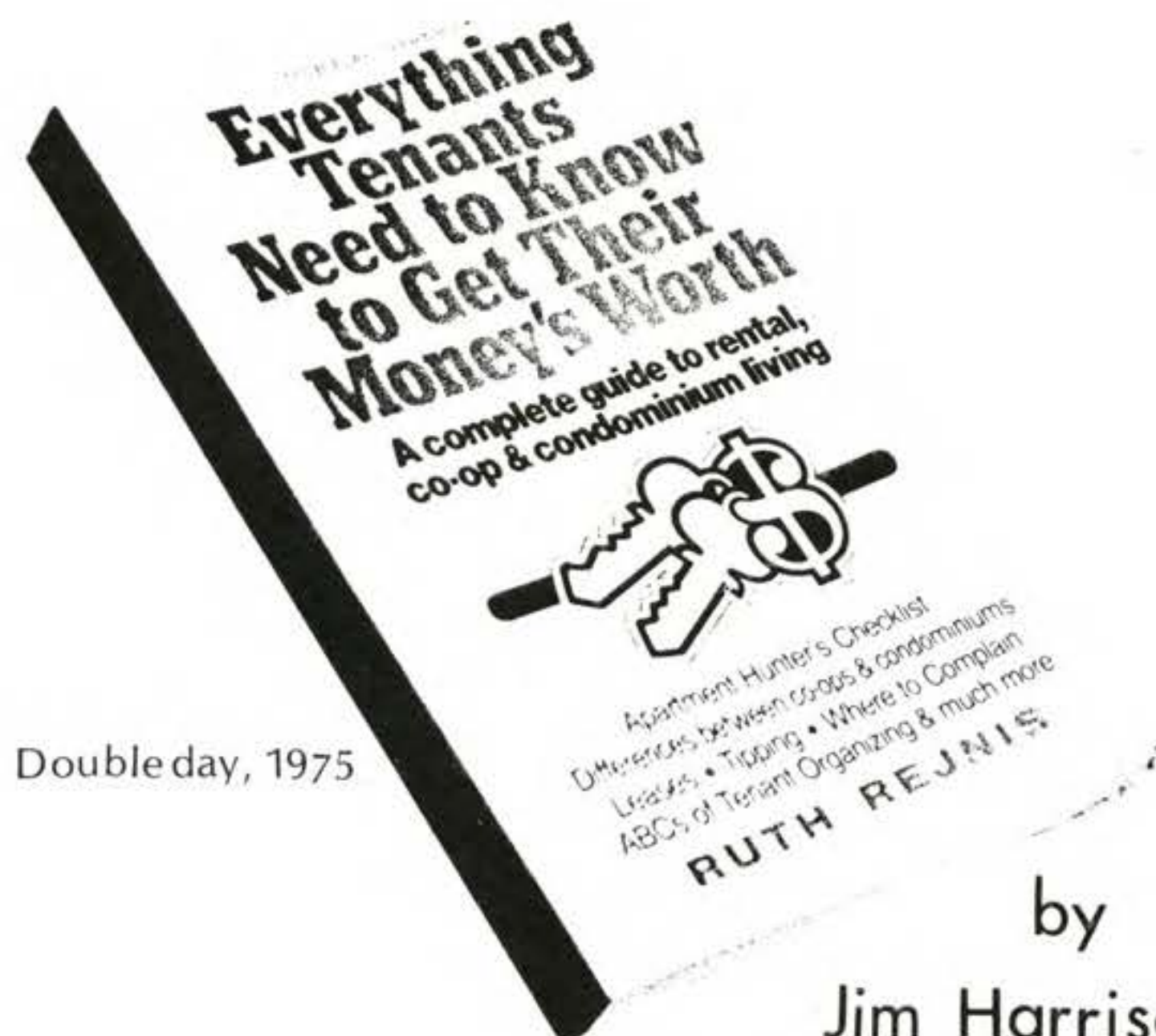
Renters, as well as being responsible for the damages they create, are expected to live up to their part of the agreement. Breaking it will probably result in a deduction from the deposit. So if you agree not to smoke or agree to keep your parrot in its cage, don't smoke and don't let your parrot out of the cage.

**O**ne renter ignored his promise because he had a pretty friendly parrot who easily talked its way out. Shortly before moving, he scrubbed the floors and woodwork so that no traces of a loose bird and a broken promise would be found. The landlord, however, checked everything and the renter had only forgotten to clean one area — the top of the small baseboard running around the entire room close to the ceiling, visible only when standing on a chair, which happened to be the bird's favorite roosting place. Needless to say, the renter lost his deposit and his former landlords no longer allow pets under any conditions.

Hopefully, you won't become involved in any of these hassles and you may even be lucky enough to have a different kind of landlord. A renter on Indian Street said she accidentally ripped a towel rack off the wall. Instead of trying to hide the damage, she told the landlord the truth, and came out ahead without paying a cent or sacrificing her deposit. But then again, not every landlord may be so full of the mercy of God.\*



## A book review:



Double day, 1975

by  
Jim Harrison

Everything? Well, most of the important stuff, anyway. If you're looking for a place to live in a small town like Bellingham, some of the information in this book may be of little practical use — like what to look for in a brownstone, or how much to tip the service staff.

But it does offer both service and experienced apartment hunters a wide variety of useful information to aid them in avoiding the many pitfalls of apartment, condominium, or cooperative living. It deals with such common rental headaches as how to get back your damage deposit and where to go to get something *done* about that leaky roof — as well as treating such subjects as how to publish a tenant newsletter and what to do about rats and roaches.

The last topic includes a fascinating section on the history of the cockroach and some of the conventional and not-so-conventional methods of controlling the little pest. Rejnis opens the chapter with a couple of cockroach anecdotes: "Late in the evening, when

they have exhausted more sophisticated party chatter, apartment dwellers may sometimes be found exchanging cockroach experiences . . ."

"Take for instance the woman who visited a hotel in Mexico. She was sitting in a darkened room watching some movies and idly fingering a brooch on her chest. Suddenly she realized she wasn't wearing a brooch."

The author goes on to give an absorbing character sketch of the insect and its special relationship with tenants, followed by a thorough discussion of what to do to rid your residence of the critters.

After the more conventional methods have been covered, Rejnis mentions a couple of others. "An enterprising Manhattan resident, who is also an assistant entomologist at the American Museum of Natural History, keeps a pet tarantula in his apartment just to get rid of roaches, a practice that is well known in the Antilles." The entomologist tethers the furry beast under his bathtub and lures the roaches into

her territory with bits of fruit.

Offering more than just a dry handbook for apartment hunters, Rejnis tries to give the reader a more-or-less complete picture of tenant life in the United States. Chapter 1, "Portrait of the Tenant," contains some throw-away facts and figures on trends in rental living, but it also offers an occasional sociological tidbit that points up the role of the housing market in today's society. Discussing roommate placement agencies — a relatively new development — she reveals her findings on agency attitudes about various types of cohabitation:

"Despite today's casual living arrangements, all agencies place only men with men and women with women. They won't even listen to requests for coed sharers. Some agencies shy away from placing homosexuals, but others find them lucrative — they say the turnover rate is high."

*Everything Tenants Need To Know* belies its title only by strangely ignoring house rentals. The author seems to have done a thorough job of investigating nearly every aspect of apartment living, but she offers no information for those renters who prefer single-residence housing. In many cases, what applies to one applies to the other, but it seems there are enough differences to make house rentals at least worth mentioning. What about rentals in rural areas, for instance?

Despite this weakness, the book provides a well-researched and well-written body of information that should go a long way toward furthering the cause of what the author calls "tenant power." In defense of its title, it offers an annotated source list for those who feel they need more information on any of the problems that can plague tenants in today's greatly expanded rental market. If this book can't answer their questions, then perhaps the National Tenants Organization; the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare; or the American Arbitration Association can.\*



# Living...

by Anita Mapes

In 1973 a group of 12 students living at Fairhaven College began work on the first Co-op living charter so that they could learn to be more self sufficient. The necessary formalities took two years of determined effort on their part to accomplish.

This alternative to on-campus living was devised by the original members of Dorm 5 at Fairhaven. After approval to turn the dorm into a co-op came through, the students set out to develop a program

*Photo by Christopher C. Plourde*





# ...They do it together

suited to the lifestyle they wished to achieve. They felt that co-op living was a logical extension of the living-learning concept of Fairhaven College. Their proposal included taking responsibility for their own cooking and cleaning, while living in private or semi-private rooms above the kitchen facilities.

Dick Norris, Assistant Dean of Fairhaven College, said that the co-op lifestyle expressed a unique student initiated housing arrangement unknown in any Washington state college to date. It has also presented many problems. The campus housing office and SAGA were understandably opposed to losing the meal ticket holders. But, one of the biggest obstacles arose when the Campus Employees Union filed a complaint stating that on-campus co-ops would result in the loss of jobs, stated Norris. The union said the co-op contracts would sign away the cleaning jobs currently held by union employees. An agreement was reached and it was decided that the custodians would still be responsible for the up-keep of the stairs and hallways in the co-op dorms.

Upon completion of cost negotiation and the \$5,000 kitchen remodeling, Dorm 5 was ready for its' first taste of co-op living in the summer of '75. The first co-op residents consisted largely of students involved in the Outback Program where they operated a small farm behind Dorms 9 and 10.

As the co-op lifestyle grew popular, Dorm 5 soon reached its' capacity of 25 members and more co-op living space was needed. Last year, Dorms 2 and 3 began organizing their own form of co-op living and since then, each co-op has developed its' own distinct character. There are wall hangings, murals and oriental rugs in the living and dining areas of all the co-ops. In Dorm 3, the upstairs hallways have even been painted in a soothing representation of rolling waves.

The lifestyle is different in each dorm to accommodate many different interests. In Dorm 5 for example, they make bread, yogurt and granola regularly. In Co-op 3, the members are half Western and half Fairhaven students, and they cook strictly vegetarian meals. And, the Women's Co-op has one floor in Dorm 2. Each dorm has weekly meetings where the members get together to pay their \$10 for the weeks food, sign-up for household responsibilities and to discuss business matters, any problems or just topics of general interest.

The Women's Co-op is a very united group with a lot of energy. Of the nine women living there this quarter (Winter 77) several participate in the Women's Studies Concentration led by Ti Grace Atkinson, a visiting faculty member from New York. When asked about her experience as a member of the Women's Co-op, she commented. "We feel a closeness and spontaneity here that we could not experience in any other situation. But it is still too expensive. We could fill this building up with women who would really benefit experiencing the energy here, but economically disadvantaged women often cannot get adequate living space. This is especially true when children are involved."

Bridget Jennings takes care of the co-op budget and is studying American History and Folklore. She said, "If we don't use all of our money one week then we ask for less the next. We tend to eat vegetarian food usually, but once a week we cook meat."







*Photo by Charles Roper*

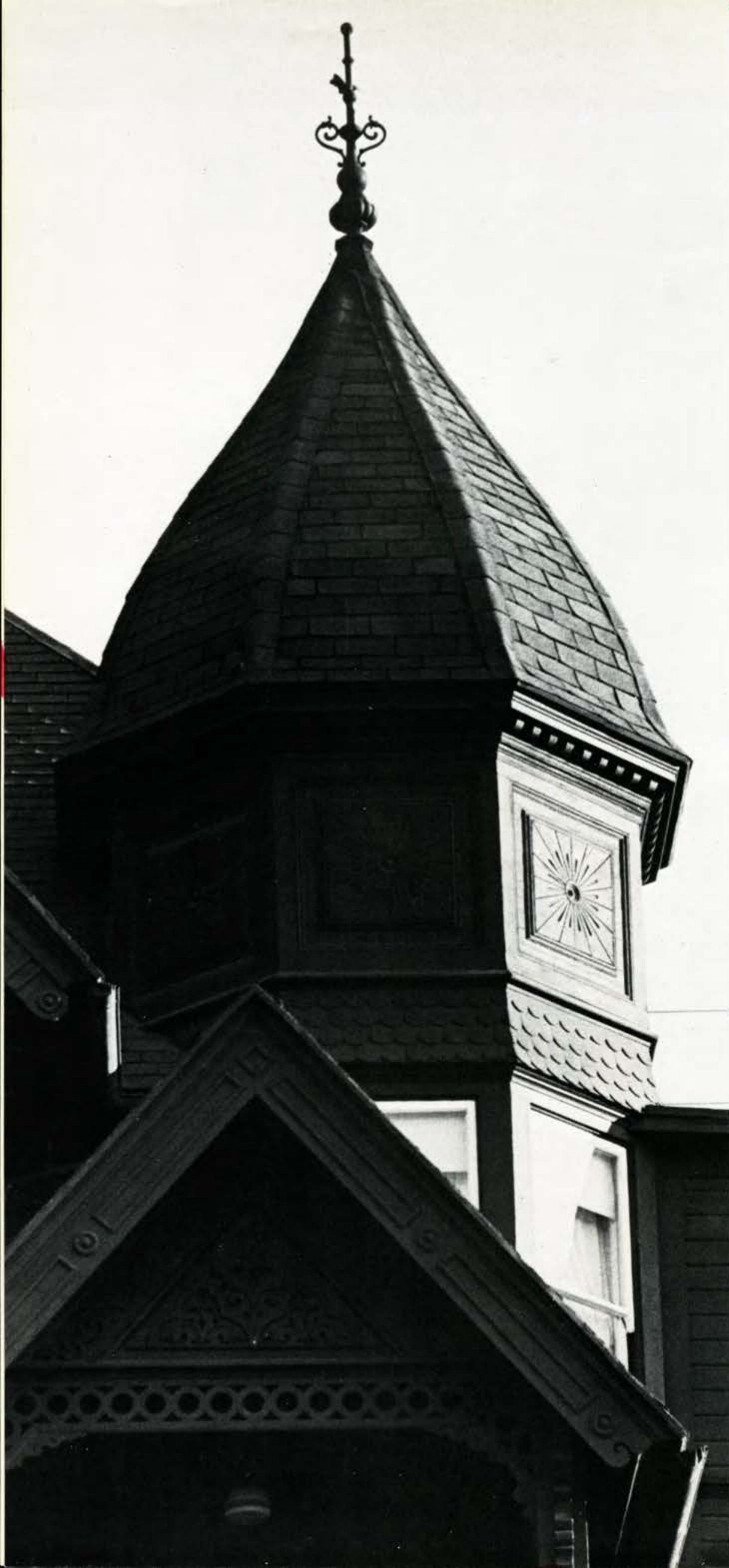


*Photo by Charles Roper*

Other women in the co-op include Flip Auer who is the mother of two children. She expressed a feeling of support from the other women that has encouraged her to take an active part in the community. Flip runs the Mama Sundays music program at Western and spends some of her free time with her horse, Shady. Other areas of interests range from political science and pre-law to art and education.

Fifty students have now made their home a stimulating environment with room for privacy and opportunities to pursue mutual interests with people committed to up-grading student life. To have a successful co-op they feel all members need to speak out and not be shy of setting up possible tensions. These students are in the business, so to speak, of exploring life. In the co-ops they are gaining confidence in the business of living.\*





## Homes That Describe People

Homes have always tended to be statements of their designers. Bellingham has several older homes which are good examples of the detail and care taken during construction around the turn of the century.

Ken Imus has taken the time for detail while remodeling his home in Fairhaven. The round stained-glass window shown here is part of that house.

Other good examples can be found in Fairhaven, the Lettered Streets district and around Sehome Hill.





Photos by Brian Nelson







# Why Pay Rent?

by D. Starbuck Goodwyn

"Hey. You pay rent? You gotta be stoned. There's this really neat way to beat it. Living free, that's what some people call it. Other people have different names for it, but it all screws down to the same things. It means living in a comfortable place without paying."

The speaker was a WWSC student. We sat in a nice, two-bedroom house where he lived. The living room was carpeted and had a glowing fireplace. His utility bills were paid and he pretty well determined his hours of work. And he paid no rent; at any rate, he didn't pay money.

The doorbell rang. My friend John went to the door and ushered in a wildly gesticulating man in his late twenties. The man whipped out a pencil and pad and began to scribble furiously. As I watched the mad exchange of notes on the tiny pad, I thought possibly the world had stopped and I had stepped off on the wrong side.

The note writer left with a smile and John came back and picked up his beer. He wore an easy smile. "The guy is a deaf mute. He asks for a little more attention than some of the tenants, but what the hell, I guess I can spare a little time for a guy that can't talk or hear."



John is one of several Western students that pay no rent. They manage multiple living complexes for the landlords and receive their rent free, and in some cases are paid a salary as well.

John talked about the job with mixed feelings. "There's a good side to it. Rent is high in Bellingham, and it seems to be higher if you go to WWSC. So, what the hell, if a person can live and not pay rent, he's ahead."

"I'll have to admit that I like the responsibility that goes along with the job. Some people like that sort of thing, a lot of people don't . . . then there is the thing that if I do a good job here, I'll have at least one good reference to use when I finish at Western."

Someone else was at the door. It was past ten in the evening and I thought John would be irritated. He wasn't. He ushered in a gray little lady that could have been General Custer's nursemaid. The lady was agitated. Some young hippies were parked in front of her unit playing loud music with a "whole lot of screaming" and they were drinking beer and smoking cigarettes that they were rolling themselves.

John left the house, was gone for a few minutes, and came back grinning. "Wasn't even a car there. The lady just wants a little attention occasionally and that's the way she goes about it. She pays her rent on time. Hell, she even reminds me a little of my grannie."

He talked about another reason he likes the job. It was a part of today's human reaction I had never thought of. He held the firm belief that in today's mobile society, the person that rents is more and more broken down from his native roots. "It's a real irony that renters have to pay from fifty to three hundred fifty dollars a month just to live, and the landlord makes the tenant feel guilty just for occupying the space."

John says he thinks it's understandable. Landlords don't really have time to be interested in the tenants. He made a point I had not thought of before, that most landlords have other business that keeps them occupied most of the time.

"So they hire a manager. Someone to look after the place. The manager is the only real contact the renter has with the person that's taking the money. A bad manager can turn a decent place into a craphouse . . . and it can work the other way around. I'll tell . . ." the doorbell jangled again.

A mid-aged tenant had heard a rumor that rents were going up. The tenant went into great detail explaining to John that he couldn't pay more. John listened patiently while the man belabored the social security system, the cost of groceries, the evils of the welfare system, and, for some unknown reason, the threat of the Chinese army.

After the man was placated, John put a "CLOSED" sign in his window. It was 11 p.m.

I looked at him quizzically and asked, "So you get your rent free?"

He chuckled, then his demeanor became serious. "Sure there are a lot of annoyances to this job. You saw more than the usual number in a short time here tonight, but this wasn't a record breaker. Usually I have three or four contacts a day with my tenants."

John has been managing apartments for about four years. He said he gets a certain satisfaction from helping the aged and the sick.

John's voice was very thoughtful. "I'll tell you this. I'm the only real contact that a lot of these people have with the outside world. Many of them have no family and their friends have forgotten them. They have passed the stage where they enjoy going outside for contacts. I'm the guy they can come to and bitch about life's inequities."

He showed a wry smile. "Hell, I'm no do-gooder. No social worker, but damn it, some one has to care a little. After all, even I may get old or sick someday."

He said he realizes that the job is not one suited for everyone. "Maybe not even most people would want it. But if you genuinely care about people the job can be damned rewarding."



Bellingham is a town that has a proportionately high number of rental units. A great many of these use some type of resident manager. The remuneration varies widely from one to the next. Some may only give a reduction of the rent and utilities and many give rent plus a salary. One thirty-unit complex near the college gives rent, utilities and pays the manager four hundred dollars a month.

The manager must expect, of course, as the material rewards go up, the amount of work and responsibility have a parallel increase.

While many of the ads that appear in the paper for such jobs specify mature, married, retired couples, these qualifications are not necessarily essential. The ads are generally worded that way because people in that category are willing to work for less.

A young person that can prove responsibility and has the tenacity to keep looking can land such a job.

So if you have the renters' blues —

why pay rent? \*



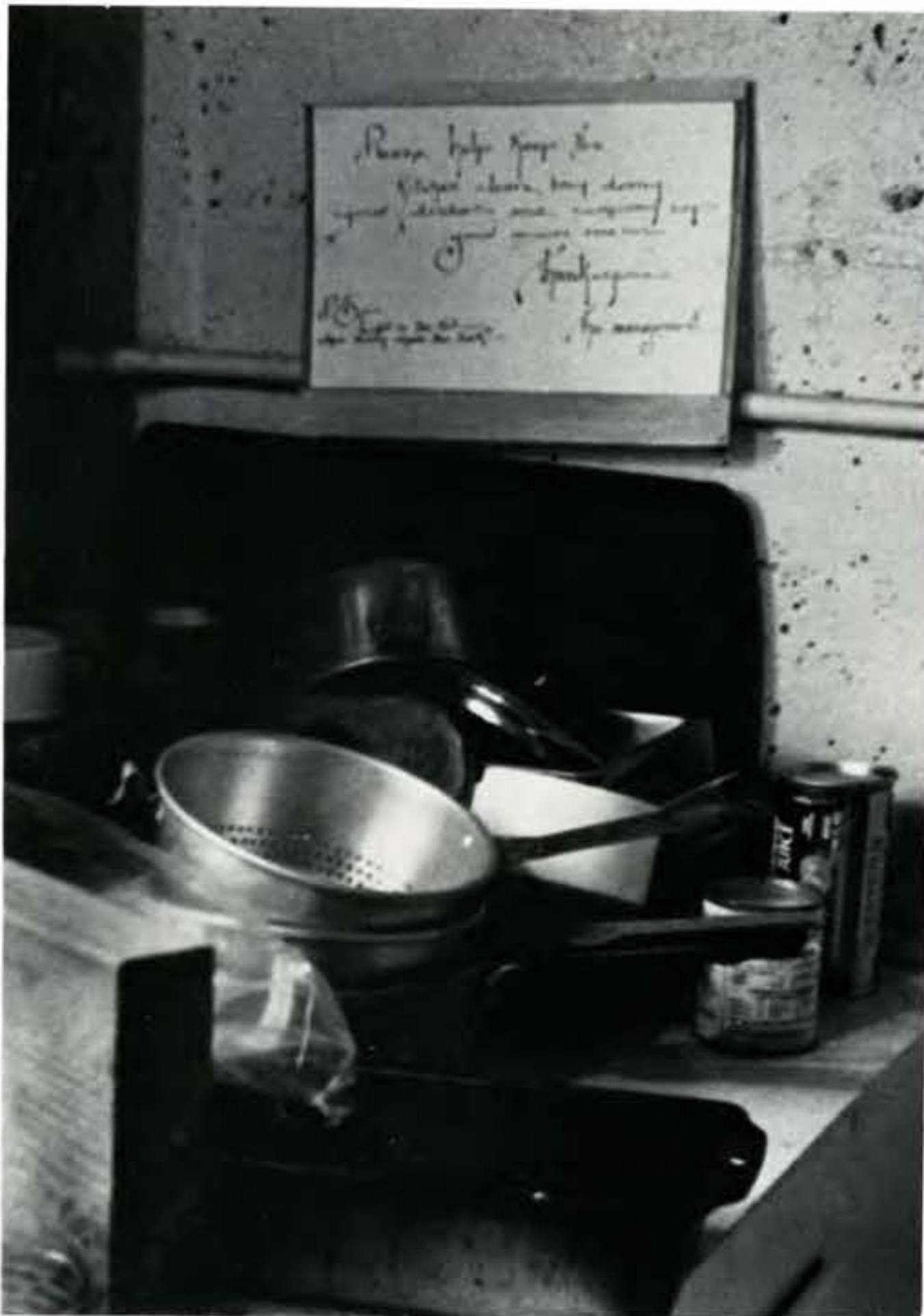
# THE OTHER SIDE

by Charles Roper

The beginning of the college quarter finds many students trudging the streets of Bellingham in the hope of acquiring accommodations, both in price and comfort.

Having decided upon a place to live, the all too familiar confrontation begins: perplexing questionnaires, invariably followed by seemingly absurd rules and regulations; not to mention the ambiguities concerning damage deposit refunds. There is at this point, an inherent tendency by the prospective tenant towards skepticism, and I've even heard people mention landlords and thieves in the same sentence.

Recently, I have had the oppor-



tunity "to sit on the other side of the fence" managing apartments and rooming houses. In doing so, I have found that there are valid reasons (although not immediately apparent) for the confusion that confronts a renter. The do's and don'ts, the contracts and the damage deposits are often initiated because of the damages encountered by the owner, many of which one discovers only after the tenant has been long gone.

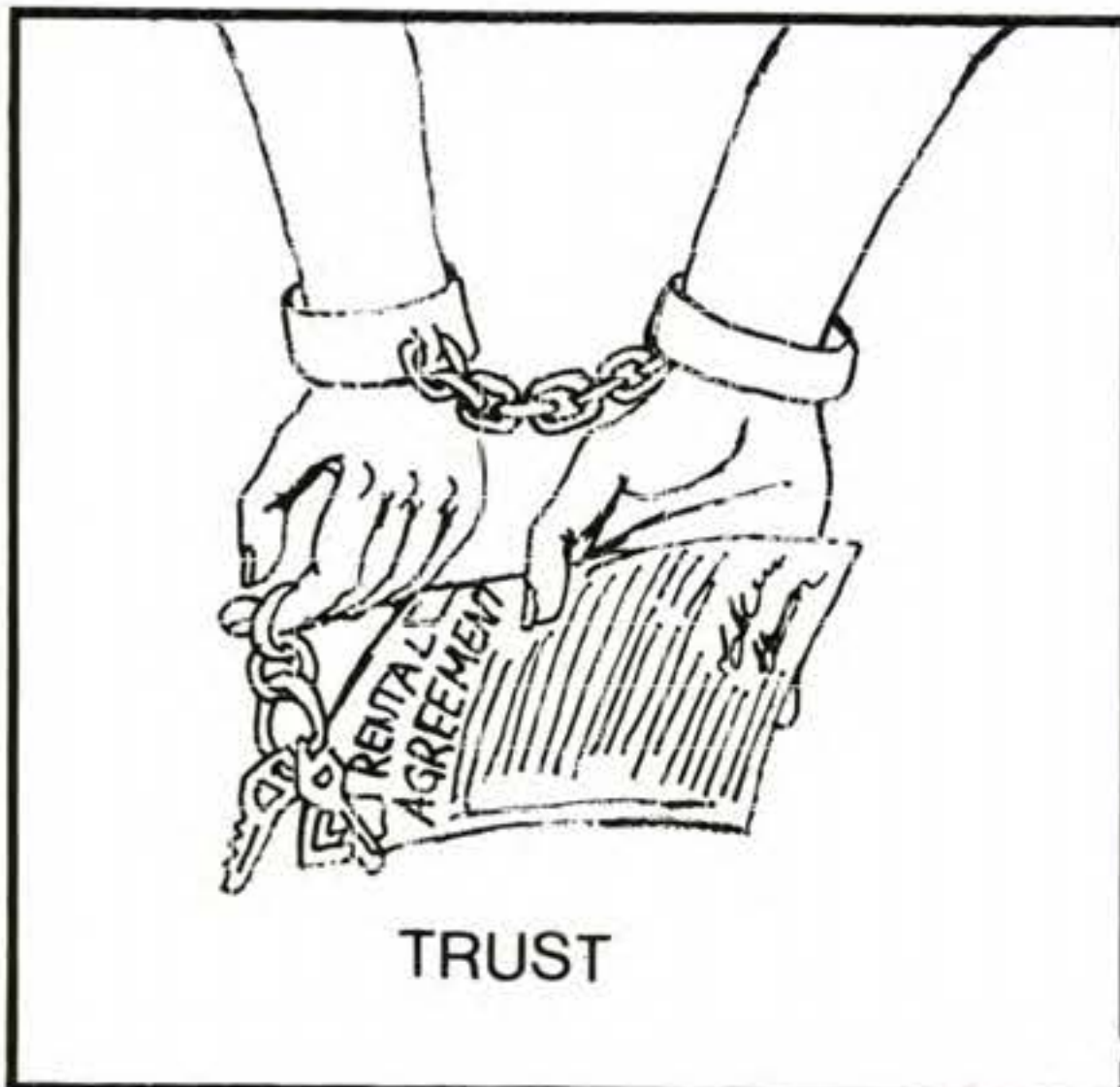
I remember one girl thought that smuggling a kitten into her room was not a terrible infringement upon the "house rules." She said, "As long as it doesn't interfere with anyone else, what



harm can it do?:” At the end of Winter quarter she moved and a new tenant rented her room. Three days later the new girl informed me that she had been bitten from head to toe by fleas. It cost the landlord \$15 to have the room fumigated.

Disputes over damage deposits have brought animosity from both landlord and tenant. One renter, I recall, could not understand why the India ink he spilled over his rug, or the cracked window pane should result in a deduction from his damage deposit.

Cleaning charges also stump many people. I once received a call from one couple who couldn't understand why \$10 had been charged for not cleaning its oven. In fact, both adamantly protested, the husband saying that they couldn't clean their oven because his wife was pregnant. I, as a manager, have no desire to clean up after someone else's mess, but if forced into the position, feel that I deserve an adequate wage for doing so.



Being asked to sign a contract has people in various states of confusion, believing that this is another ploy to rip 'em off. However, a contract, is security to the landlord ensuring that renters do not leave without giving the legal 20 days notice, thus enabling the room to be rented.

I do not insinuate that all landlords are honest, but usually when problems occur the misunderstanding is on the behalf of both parties, and all I'm suggesting is that, there is another side.\*



# Low Rent Housing: Not Enough to Go Around

By  
Liz Rust

Bellingham has plenty of homes — but not enough low-rent housing for the city's low-income families, the elderly and Western students.

According to Helen Farias, coordinator of off-campus housing at Western, a shortage of low-rent homes and inadequate transportation combine to make the possibility of no shelter a reality for many.

The houses at Sudden Valley have gone begging for tenants she said, because they are too expensive and too far away. Buses do not run between Bellingham and Sudden Valley.

Most students have experienced the exhausting search for "perfect" housing for each school year. Some call it the impossible dream. As the summer wears on, most forget about the ideal place, and if they haven't found a place for themselves and roomies by August 31, they panic and begin thinking of taking the first quarter off.

A survey conducted by the off-campus housing service in May, 1976, indicated that most students (70 per cent) would like to "live in a house, furnished, with two bedrooms, costing each person between \$60 and \$70." Many stated they would rent an apartment meeting the same conditions.

For families finding a low-rent home is tougher than for students, Farias said, for families cannot split up while most students can. With children the home should be near a school and not on a busy street.

The shortage of low-rent housing exists not only in Bellingham but throughout Whatcom County as well, according to Helen Ebright, office manager of the Bellingham Housing Authority (BHA).

One practice that has pushed property values and rents up is that people buy property, convert it to multiple-occupant facilities, and then cater to students, according to Jim Johnson, president of Good Housing for Low-Income People. Renting to a number of people increases the cash return on a place. If another buyer wanted to convert one of

these homes back to a family dwelling, it would be costly, Johnson added.

The general lack of homes causes rents to go up also, he added.

Western's enrollment increase over the last five years is not necessarily to blame for lack of housing because at the time of the increase, people began opening their homes to students. At the same time, however, realtors bought homes and rented to students and effected tighter controls on contracts, such as limiting the number of students in a dwelling.

Students' quest for housing is not hot only during August and September: during the spring they begin looking for suitable summer housing, and before June for fall housing, on through the summer.

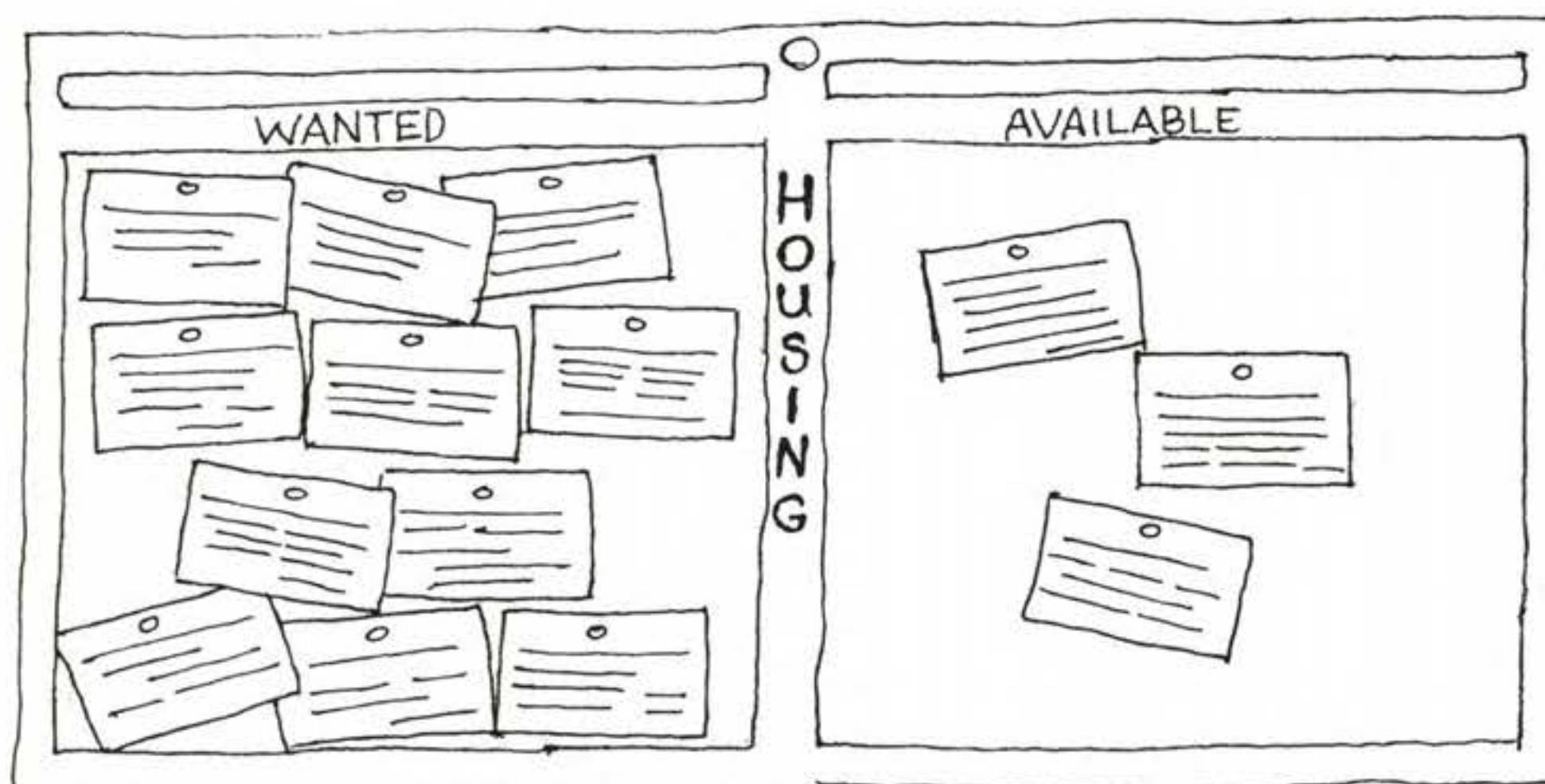
Multiple-dwelling, high-rise, pragmatically-designed buildings do not seem to be what many want. According to the May survey, students would rather live in old houses, A-frames and studio apartments. In the last twenty years, only "ticky-tacky" buildings have gone up, Farias said.

Plans to rezone 12 acres in Happy Valley, from residential medium density to residential low-density two, thereby limiting the construction of more apartments have created a stir among landowners and inhabitants in and around that area. Sentiments regarding the move indicate the majority of residents and property owners agree with the rezoning idea while a minority, who own most of the property there, disagree.

Farias said renovating older houses is a feasible solution to overcrowding. She said the federal government, probably through HUD, should finance the work.

Johnson said he has proposed a joint project to Pete Coy, director of on-campus housing for Western, in which the city and college could build another mobile home court for students. Then, if the enrollment of Western dropped, as it is expected to





in five years, the court would be closed temporarily or be taken over by the city. He believes the venture could be financed by both city and college.

Coy said he needs to see statistics from Johnson to show the need for such a move, and that the goals of campus planners would have to be taken into account before such a plan could even be considered. He said he does not know enough about overcrowding in Bellingham to venture a judgement.

A survey conducted by the College Planning office last fall indicated that many students polled feel the college should bring about cheaper on-campus housing rates and build more college apartments to help meet student housing needs, as opposed to other solutions.

According to Betty Farnham of College Planning and a memo from college planner Barney Goltz, the college does not plan to build more on-campus housing because a gradual decline in enrollment is expected from 1982-85.

According to Farias, the addition of on-campus dormitories would not relieve the overcrowding, because most people want privacy, and a cooperative living situation, and they want to leave the campus behind them at the end of a day.

The BHA currently provides a federal rental supplement program which gives low-income families rent money, so that they may move into more expensive homes. Under the program, recipients pay no more than 25 per cent of their rent and utilities. Due to a limited budget, the amount per family size is set and cannot always meet specific needs. Also due to budget, the program can only supplement 170 families within a five-mile radius of Bellingham.

BHA will implement a county program of this nature within the next month, according to Ebright, subsidizing 100 families. Under both programs, tenants must find houses themselves.

BHA tried to begin a housing listing service a few years ago, but could not get the cooperation of many landlords on the project.

Ebright said a program to place elderly people also exists. When a vacancy comes up, people on a waiting list may move into one of three high-rises specifically for senior citizens. Both this program and the rent subsidy program have long waiting lists, however.

Through an HUD grant administered by the Community Development office in city hall, low-income and moderate-income home owners may rehabilitate their homes.

There is not a lot of resentment among the low-income families, the elderly and students, Farias said. There is frustration, Johnson said. If anything, people want to work together, according to Farias.

All groups are discriminated against by landlords for various reasons, Farias said. Landlords often don't want to rent to students for sound reasons, such as fear of abuse of furniture and the house itself, she said. Many landlords for one reason or another will not allow children or pets in their dwellings and that is their legal right.

Johnson said that the college does not feel the pressure as does the city, because dorms are not always overcrowded. But he said he believes the college is concerned. The presence of a college in a town may cause overcrowding but many feel the cultural and economic benefits of the college outweigh problems of this nature.

Nevertheless, overcrowding, due to lack of low-rent housing, makes for an uncomfortable situation for many. While a general consensus believes there is a problem, proposed solutions are few and diverse. If college enrollment does drop as expected the pressure may be alleviated to a degree. But in the meantime, a feasible plan has not been found, and overcrowding does indeed exist.\*







# Space Heaters

Photos by Darrell Butorac  
and Bob Slone

Some people spend half their day in buildings like those pictured here. They are an extension of home, part of our artificial environment.

They are the space heaters, glass skinned beauties. Heat flows from them in the winter as well as cool air during the summer. With all the natural beauty in the world, one wonders if these artificial delights are worth the price.





# the grass is greener

In searching for the 'good life,' students are confronted with a choice: Whether they should live on or off campus. The choice isn't easy when one thinks about it. While on-campus students contend with noise and lack of privacy, off-campus students face landlords, inconvenient locations and keeping track of bills. Students would do well to follow that trusty nugget of election advice: Pick the lesser of two evils.

Currently, about 3,600 students live on campus while another 6,400 live off campus in residential areas and the college-owned Fairhaven Apartments and mobile homes north of town.

On this basis, off-campus living seems heavily preferred. However, the numbers tell another story. From fall quarter, 1973, to winter quarter, 1977, dorm populations (including those of the on-campus apartments of Birnam Wood and Buchanan Towers) rose from 77 per cent of operating capacity to just over 90 per cent. This, in large part, is due to recent enrollment increases.

Numbers pop up in another place: finances. The average monthly living cost for both on- and off-campus students is roughly \$150. In the way of bills, though, dorm students have a definite advantage. Everything, except the phone bill, is paid in one convenient package. For \$351-737, depending on living arrangements and the time of year, one pays for rent, utilities and food.

Off-campus students are stuck with making monthly budgets, comparable to juggling several bottles of nitroglycerin. They separately pay rent, electricity, gas, phone and food bills.

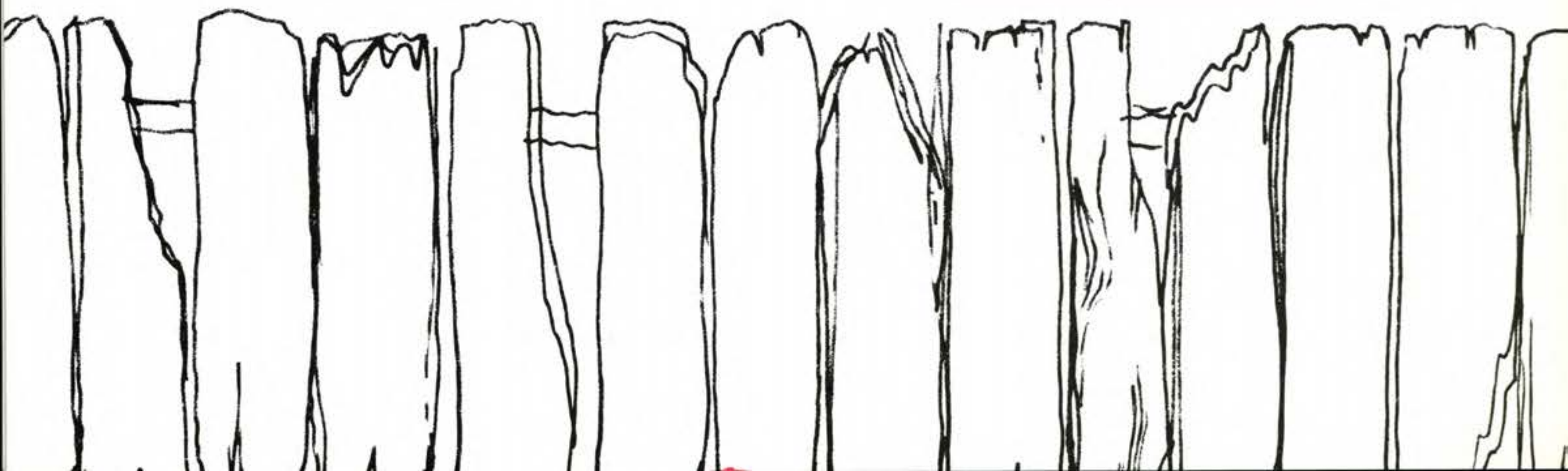
An accounting system must be established. Unfortunately, off-campus students often do a poor job of accounting because of the time spent on parties, studies and work, not necessarily in that order. This is when the 'handwriting on the wall' is written by credit agencies.

About the only way dorm students can save money is by having roommates. In fact, most cannot make ends meet without them since costs of single/single and double/single rooms run \$50-350 above those of double/double rooms.

On the other hand, off-campus tenants have an array of financial shortcuts.

The Department of Social and Health Services (222 Unity in Bellingham) offers a \$50 monthly allotment of food stamps for only a portion of that sum. It also provides plenty of red tape, so do not expect your stamps right away.

For energy-conscious off-campus students, there is a host of ways to reduce gas and electricity bills. Form car pools, turn down the thermostat, use lower wattage light bulbs, and don't listen to a radio, stereo





# on which side ? by greg hoofnagle

and TV while you are in the kitchen clanging pots and pans.

Dormies and non-dormies alike struggle with phone bills. They almost always add up to more than expected. One student couldn't seem to remember when she made a particular \$15 long-distance call; the 'next best thing to being there' isn't always the best thing for your wallet. (Warning: Ma Bell's computers actually make mistakes! One guy was charged the same \$35 phone bill twice.)

Food also poses problems on both sides of the housing fence.

On-campus students face two things during finals week — tests and SAGA (variously called Students Against Good Appetite and South American Garbage Association). The food, like the students, is tired,

bedraggled and blah. Nevertheless, SAGA offers a gut-boggling array of foods and beverages which most off-campus students cannot afford.

Dormies may have more from which to choose, but non-dormies have more of a choice in what they eat. They can cook what they like, when they like. Since dinner is not at a set time, they seldom miss a meal because of classes.

Yet, the off-campus student's food bill must be diligently watched. While SAGA students eat meats, salads, fruits and ice cream, others may often lead the 'Campbell's life,' which is certainly not as glamorous as shown on the tube. Those folks also have steaks in their freezers!

In addition to Campbell's soup, off-campus students struggle with a major student nemesis — the common landlord. While most landlords are quite reasonable, some appear to think they are gods. A 'Day of Judgment' comes once a month when rent is due. At that time, landlords scurry from their comfortable homes in search of checks and \$100 bills.

If their tenants don't answer the door it's either because they don't have rent money or because they're not at home. Strangely enough, the latter holds true most often.

This is when the devilish side of some landlords comes out. They start to snoop. One student complained that while she was gone her landlady came in and made herself at home. Another lamented his landlord's perversity of dropping by at 10 p.m. when everybody is stoned.

Landlords also devise myriad rules which can make off-campus life almost as restrictive as dorm life at a religious college. No pets, they carry fleas. No stereo or radio playing after 9 p.m., they'll bother the neighbors. No guests of the opposite sex spending the night, you should be studying. (A couple go so far as even prohibiting guests for dinner.)





While landlords occasionally invade privacy, on-campus students could easily lose track of the word's meaning. For them, privacy is THE 'rara avis.'

Dormies actually compete for privacy. Ted brings his girlfriend to the room, so Ned feels compelled to go someplace else. Unless, of course, Ned 'stands up for his rights.' This is when roommates part in search of more cooperative and compatible compatriots.

Dorm lounges are frequently wall-to-wall with people wanting a little privacy.

The bathrooms are another story. In some dorms, like Nash Hall, one serves an entire floor. Take more than 10 minutes in the shower at eight in the morning and an impatiently waiting line of half-clad comrades screams madly at you from outside. Long, hot showers are a dried up dream. And there is always the dread that while you are busy on one side of the curtain, someone on the other side is busy ripping off your towel, shampoo, or even clothes.

Off-campus students, sharing a house or apartment, escape these problems. Most have their own rooms and long, hot showers are possible if the bills have been paid.

With your own room you can even type till two in the morning or play melancholy music to your heart's content.

Typing till the morning's wee hours makes noise. So do on-campus students who have apparently created a sound cult. Ritual throbbing of stereos on week nights religiously mix with the clacking of typewriters and the flushing of toilets.

Some dormies, driven mad by studying, scream through hazy days, tossing water balloons at each

other. If you're lucky enough to get caught in the crossfire, it spares you the morning shower rush.

Weekends are extreme. If no holidays make for three days of rest, the dorm rumbles with music turned to '5' or '6' on Marantz-Richter-scale-dials. Beer bottles smash on pool tables. Cars squeal like pigs in panic.

Everyone is gone over the holiday weekend and the dorms are a pandemonium of silence.

While on-campus students hassle with lack of privacy and lots of noise, non-dormies boast a unique inconvenience: location. Not everybody lives on High and Indian Sts. While dormies are just five to ten minutes from classes, a bank, a deli, a swimming pool, a coffee shop and scores of concerts, movies and lectures, off-campus students either have to walk, catch a bus or drive to campus.

Walking is cheap, but no fun on cold, rainy days which Bellingham has aplenty in winter and summer. Driving, especially if someone lives in Sudden Valley, requires huge sums of money for liquid gold.

Catching a bus becomes a challenge. Early in the morning, off-campus students get up half an hour before class and sleepily prepare to make the bus. Since city buses commonly pass through residential areas once every 30-60 minutes, missing one means missing a class. Great and many are the heartbreaks of coming out the front door just as one is leaving.

Whether a student chooses to chase a bus or compete for privacy, the 'good life' evades him. On-campus and off-campus living weigh out about the same in advantages and disadvantages. Perhaps one's problems would be solved if he built a house on the quietest end of campus, wherever that may be \*



